

Attorney Docket No. 19799-194
Serial No. 10/656,083

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented) An endoscopic band ligator comprising:

an inner sleeve mountable over an endoscope shaft;
a middle sleeve longitudinally slidably relative to the inner sleeve and carrying at least one ligating band about its outer surface;
an outer sleeve slidably relative to the middle and inner sleeves and having projecting fingers to engage in discharging a ligating band from the middle sleeve.

Claim 2 (previously presented) An endoscopic band ligator as defined in claim 1 wherein the middle sleeve further comprises at least one angled circumferential ridge formed on an exterior surface of the sleeve in relation to which the at least one band can be seated.

Claim 3 (previously presented) An endoscopic band ligator as defined in claim 2 wherein the middle sleeve further comprises longitudinal channels traversing the at least one circumferential ridge in which the projecting fingers of the outer sleeve may slide.

Claims 4-10 (cancelled).

Claim 11 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 1, wherein the middle and outer sleeves are made from one or more transparent materials.

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Claim 12 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 1, wherein the inner sleeve has a small diameter portion that steps up to a large diameter portion at the proximal end of the sleeve.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 1, wherein the distal tip of the inner sleeve has a radially inward projecting lip sufficiently deep to catch the distal face of an endoscope inserted therein.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 12, wherein an annular vacuum seal is fitted into the large diameter portion of the inner sleeve.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 1 wherein the middle sleeve has a plurality of circumferential saw-tooth ridges extending along its length, wherein the distal side of each ridge is of a greater diameter than the proximal side, and wherein there is a land between the proximal and distal ends of each ridge configured to receive a ligating band.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 3, comprising two longitudinal channels, 180° apart.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 3, wherein each finger is comprised of a resilient arm configured to slide within a longitudinal channel.

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Claim 18 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 17, wherein each finger is further comprised of a radially inwardly directed protrusion on the resilient arm having a distal face configured to engage a band mounted on the middle sleeve.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The endoscopic band ligator of claim 1, wherein the inside surface of the outer sleeve comprises longitudinally extending and radially spaced ribs.

Claim 20 (previously presented): A method of endoscopically applying a ligating band comprising:

- (a) providing an endoscopic band ligator assembly comprising three coaxially arranged sleeves, wherein the inner sleeve is configured to be mounted over the distal end of an endoscope shaft, the middle sleeve is longitudinally slidable relative to the inner sleeve and carries at least one ligating band about its outer surface, and the outer sleeve is slidable relative to the middle and inner sleeves and has projecting fingers configured to discharge a ligating band from the middle sleeve;
- (b) mounting the inner sleeve over the distal end of an endoscope shaft;
- (c) navigating the endoscope to a treatment site with the middle and outer sleeves retracted proximally from the distal face of the endoscope;
- (d) extending the middle and outer sleeves distally relative to the inner sleeve and the distal face of the endoscope at the treatment site to create a vacuum chamber;
- (e) aspirating a tissue portion into the vacuum chamber;
- (f) sliding the outer sleeve distally relative to the middle cylinder to push a ligating band from the middle sleeve onto the tissue.

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Claim 21 (currently amended) The method of claim [[21]] 20, further comprising:

(b) moving the outer sleeve proximally back along the middle sleeve such that the fingers ride over a next distal ligating band and become positioned just proximal to the band in readiness to push the band distally off the middle sleeve with the next distal movement of the outer sleeve.